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632 The general situation of the *municipio* has
634 already been discussed in the first section of this paper. That discussion and maps 1, 2, and 3 indicate the main features, and no further amplification seems necessary.

The *municipio* has fairly well defined boun-
423 daries, although there are usually disputes with
632 neighboring communities. Thus Cherán currently has disputes with Cheranástico and Arantepacua. The boundaries are marked in various ways. In the cultivated areas the boundaries are marked with stone walls. Where water courses form the boundaries, no markers are placed, but in the woods, a strip 4 or 5 meters wide is cleared along the
[476] boundary. This is done by communal labor, and when the line needs clearing again an assembly is called and a day fixed for the work. Every male is supposed to go. The Municipal Representative (described later) is supposed to lead the party.

## THE TOWN AND ITS SUBDIVISIONS

● 633 Cherán is a compact and essentially urban
[165] settlement with a population of about 5,000. Few North Americans, unfamiliar with the concentrated settlement forms of Mexican towns, would imagine it contained anything like this population. There are no suburbs and very little straggling out of houses from the main center. Around the outskirts the lots are a little bigger and the density of population is less but the transition from town to open fields is nevertheless abrupt.

361 The layout of the town is undistinguished. A central plaza with a fountain, *portales* or sidewalks covered with arches about it, the municipal building, school, priest's residence, and church may be duplicated in hundreds of Mexican towns. The plaza is not today the center of the settlement geographically. Undoubtedly the town has grown since the time of its founding, and because of the deep *barranca* to the north, expansion has been in the other directions, leaving the plaza north of the present center of town by two or three blocks.

363 Radiating from the plaza is a network of streets laid out in a rectangular grid which makes only minimal concessions to the irregularities of the terrain. The enclosed blocks or *manzanas* are utilized as administrative divi-

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sions of the town. This feature will be discussed later.

A larger subdivision than the block is furnished by the *barrio* as indicated in maps 4 and 5. These divisions function in relation to elections, office holding, and certain municipal and ceremonial obligations. *Barrio* No. I is to the northwest and is known as Jalúkutin, or in Hispanicized form Urúkutin. This name is said to mean "something on edge" or "something in a small corner," apparently referring either to its position on the edge of the largest *barranca* or its position against the small hill on the northeast edge of town. *Barrio* No. II is called "Keíku," "down," or the lower *barrio* (*barrio de abajo*), and is the southwest *barrio*. The southeast *barrio*, No. III, is "Kalákua," "up," the upper *barrio* (*barrio de arriba*). *Barrios* II and III are usually known by their Spanish terms, and not everyone knows the Tarascan names. The fourth *barrio* is Paricutin. This means "to pass to the other side" and refers to the position of the *barrio* on the other side of a *barranca*.

The *barrios* show very few differences. Paricutin is less populated, has larger lots, and is said formerly to have been more isolated and backward, with fewer people speaking Spanish. The staff of the investigation all had the impression that this is still true to some extent, although little concrete evidence could be secured. Certainly, as the staff can well attest, the dogs of Paricutin are far less socialized than those of the remainder of the town.

Membership in the *barrio* is based entirely on residence. Property owners who reside in another *barrio* have *barrio* obligations only in the place of residence. There is no rivalry between *barrios* nor any instances in which *barrios* act as units on their own initiative. All the functions of the *barrio* appear to be derived from the *municipio*. There is no evidence whatever that the *barrio* has anything to do with regulating marriage or other social relationships. Even *barrio* chapels are lacking. In all probability the subdivisions are of Spanish origin and the only reason for suspecting otherwise lies in the mention of *barrios* by early Spanish writers in nearby areas.[27]

[27] On the other hand, as Silvio Zavala has shown fairly convincingly, Bishop Quiroga, first bishop of Michoacán and great

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## THE POPULATION

161 The total population of Cherán in 1940 was about 5,000 as indicated by voting lists. Data from other censuses follow:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1900 | 4,395 |
| 1910 | 3,908 |
| 1920 | 3,552 |
| 1930 | Not available |

162 Information concerning the age composition of the Cherán population is limited. The only source of adequate information is provided by the voting lists for the 1940 election for two *barrios* and interviews. This information applies only to men of voting age. A summary of this information is given in table 10. The

TABLE 10.—*Age and occupational distribution of Cherán males*

| Age and occupation and other classifications | Distribution of males in *barrio*— | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I (partial) | II (partial) | III | IV | Total |
| Age group: | | | | | |
| 18–30 (17–30 for *barrio* III) | 29 | 16 | 62 | 86 | 193 |
| 31–40 | 24 | 13 | 85 | 35 | 157 |
| 41–50 | 17 | 15 | 62 | 62 | 146 |
| 51–60 | 15 | 10 | 27 | 18 | 70 |
| 61–70 | 7 | 12 | 26 | 15 | 60 |
| 71–90 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Age not listed | 2 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 14 |
| Total | 101 | 72 | 267 | 227 | 847 |
| [212] Unmarried | 3 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| Able to read | 25 | 40 | 51 | 29 | 145 |
| Occupation: | | | | | |
| [463] Agriculturalist | 73 | 47 | 124 | 63 | 307 |
| Laborer | 6 | 5 | 119 | 133 | 263 |
| Merchant (traders and storekeepers) | 10 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 23 |
| Hatmaker | | 2 | | 1 | 3 |
| Mason | 1 | | 3 | 2 | 6 |
| Carpenter | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 10 |
| Barber | 1 | 2 | | | 3 |
| Musician | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 4 |
| Maestro | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Shoemaker | | 1 | 6 | 1 | 8 |
| Tilemaker | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Various or none given | 4 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 16 |

data on ages is probably more reliable than that from most primitive groups but still is not completely accurate. An analysis of the original data shows that a very great majority of the ages given end in "0" or "5," clearly indicating that they are guesses. Interviews showed the presence of a tendency to increase the ages of young men, and a decrease in the ages of elderly men is suspected.

162 217 Additional incomplete but interesting data on the population are provided by the study of

[633] evangelist of the Tarascans, was much influenced by Sir Thomas More's Utopia. The Utopian cities were divided into four divisions which served administrative purposes (Zavala, 1937; More, 1923, p. 54).